

# LOUISIANA BELIEVES ANNUAL REPORT 2013

## Louisiana Believes

has three components:

### BELIEF IN CHILDREN.

Louisiana students are just as smart and capable as any in America. Our basic expectations for them should be on a level playing field with expectations for kids across the country.

### BELIEF IN EDUCATORS.

Louisiana educators are accountable for student achievement. At the same time, they must be empowered to make decisions on behalf of the children they serve.

### BELIEF IN FAMILY.

Louisiana families, especially those whose children attend struggling schools, should be able to choose the school that is right for them. Parents and students should also be able to choose rigorous courses that prepare students for a college degree or a high-wage job.

**Louisiana Believes** is the state's comprehensive plan to ensure every student is on track to a professional career or a college degree. This annual report details Louisiana's progress toward that objective during the 2012-2013 school year, along with strategy for the coming school year.



Since the state first began working toward these goals, **Louisiana has achieved important results and created a foundation for continued improvement.**

## LOUISIANA'S RESULTS

GOAL	PREVIOUS	CURRENT	MOVEMENT
Students enter Kindergarten ready	52%	54%	↑
Students arrive 4th grade on-time and on-level (passing both ELA + Math 3rd grade iLEAP)	53.7%	55.90%	↑
Students arrive 9th grade on-time and on-level (passing both ELA + Math 8th grade LEAP)	42.8%	43.8%	↑
Students on track to college in 9th grade (achieving 17 on composite EXPLORE)	19.95%*	40.15%	↑
Students on track to college in 11th grade (achieving 20 on composite ACT)	48.0%*	TBD	
Students will graduate on time (Cohort Graduation Rate)	71.4%	72.3%	↑
Graduates will persist through college: percent of graduates passing one AP or IB test	4.2%	TBD	
Students will enroll in college or join workforce: percent who enroll or are certified to work	FTF: 61.9% IBC: 16%	FTF: 68.3% IBC: 16.3%	↑

\* Estimates as number of students increases

## BELIEF IN CHILDREN

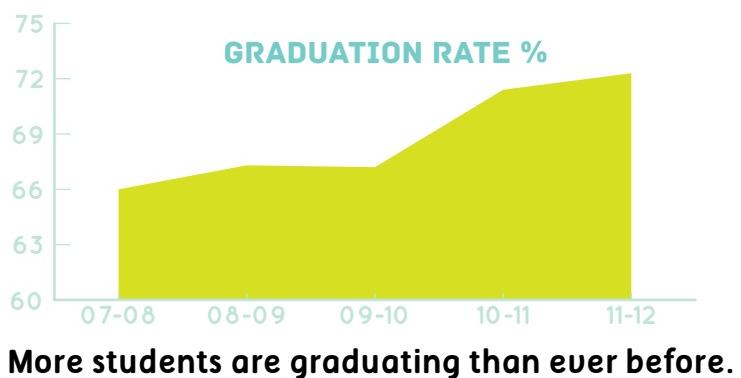
Louisiana students are just as capable as those in any other state. Believing in students means ensuring the basic expectations we have for our children are on a level playing field with expectations of their peers around the country and the world.

- **Raising Basic Expectations for Students.**

This school year Louisiana increased the rigor of its annual assessments through more challenging writing questions. In 2013-2014, Louisiana's English and math assessments will entirely represent higher expectations. To prepare for this, every school district is ensuring teachers are provided regular feedback and opportunities to collaborate. The state has also designated 2,000 educators – at least one from each school – as **Louisiana Teacher Leaders** who are deeply trained in the new expectations.

- **Raising Expectations for Schools.** In 2012 the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved a simplified accountability system that is more rigorous. Schools now earn points only for students above grade level. Students also have more opportunities for rigorous coursework, such as Advanced Placement, and take the ACT series of tests starting in 8th grade. For the first time, schools earn bonus points for making exceptional progress with struggling students.

- **High Expectations Start Early.** The quality of early childhood expectations varies greatly from program to program. Fifteen Early Childhood Network Pilot parishes coordinate programming across all types of early learning providers – childcare, pre-kindergarten, private schools and HeadStart – to ensure common expectations, common supports for educators, unified enrollment systems, and accountability for results.



# BELIEF IN EDUCATORS

Louisiana educators are accountable for student progress. If we believe in them to help our children develop and achieve, we must also trust them to make decisions for themselves.

## • Giving Classroom Educators the Tools to Teach.

Rather than telling teachers how they should teach, Louisiana provides educators with tools they can use to make decisions.

› **Curriculum.** Choosing instructional materials is a job for educators, not bureaucrats. Louisiana ended the prescriptive Comprehensive Curriculum and allowed schools and districts to choose texts. In 2013, the state launched the online **Classroom Support Toolbox** from which teachers can choose yearlong curriculum plans, assessment guides, instructional videos, and receive direction on how to set goals for student achievement.

› **Compass** is a tool to provide teachers and school leaders feedback to help them improve. In the 2012-2013 school year, 39,110 educators participated in classroom observations and 45,859 set goals for student achievement as part of the Compass system.

› **Technology for Learning.** In the summer of 2012, only five school districts out of 70 had computer and Internet technology adequate for 21st century learning. By early 2013, the number had quadrupled, in part due to Louisiana's nationally celebrated **Technology Footprint report**.

## • Empowering Educators to Make Decisions.

In 2012-2013 Louisiana shifted its approach from one of top-down dictates to educator empowerment:

› **Leaders Leading Schools.** Every district in the state created new compensation plans and reduction in force policies. In accordance with Act 1, superintendents assumed responsibility for all personnel decisions.

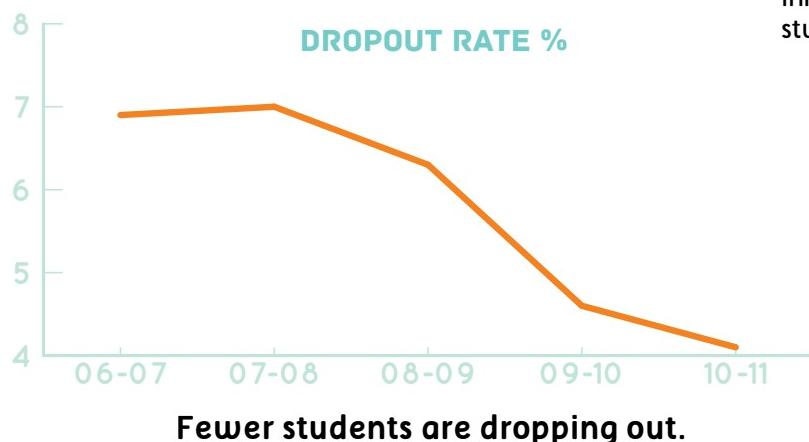


› **Network Teams.** Department of Education **network teams** support school district staff according to the academic needs of each unique school system.

› **Louisiana Teacher Leaders.** Started in 2013, the **Teacher Leaders** are 2,000 educators leading the Common Core and Compass change at their schools.

› **A Focus on Results, not Rules.** The Department of Education cut through reams of red tape, **reducing the role of the notorious Bulletin 741** and providing unprecedented flexibility in spending federal funds through its **No Child Left Behind waiver**.

› **Believe and Include.** Empowerment means encouraging innovation. In 2012, the Department launched **Believe and Include**, a \$4 million competitive grant program that repurposes federal funding previously spent on bureaucracy, to instead fund innovative initiatives at schools that directly impact students with disabilities.





## BELIEF IN FAMILIES

In 2012–2013, Louisiana expanded options for families, so that each student has the right plan for his or her needs.

- **A Choice for Students in Struggling Schools.** Louisiana is reducing the number of students attending D- and F-rated schools.
- › **Turnaround in New Orleans.** The Recovery School District's improvement outpaced the state for the sixth year in a row, leading the state in proficiency growth on the LEAP and iLEAP tests. In New Orleans, the Recovery School District is closing the achievement gap with the state, narrowing the gap from 23 points to six points and is on track to close the gap completely by 2014.
- › **RSD beyond New Orleans.** In 2012, the Recovery School District launched the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone, recruiting six high-quality charter school organizations to launch schools in Baton Rouge beginning in the fall of 2014.
- › **Believe and Succeed.** Louisiana doubled the number of charter school start-up applicants in 2013 through **Believe and Succeed**, a competitive grant program that provides seed funding to new district schools and charter schools alike.

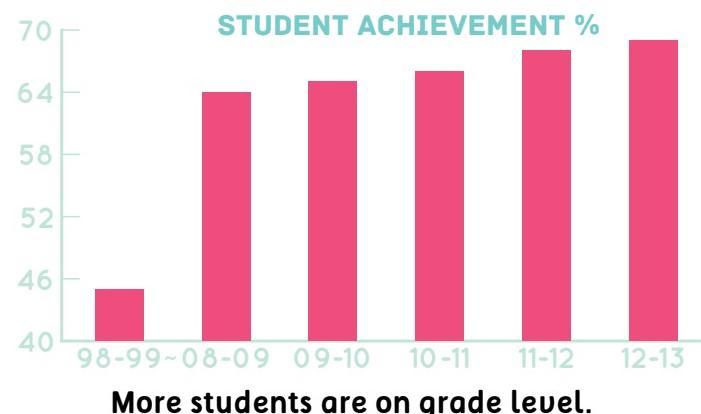
### › The Louisiana Scholarship Program.

In 2013, more than 93 percent of parents of students participating in the **Scholarship Program** reported satisfaction with their children's school. From 2012 to 2013, the program saw an increase in the number of applicants, growing from approximately 10,000 to approximately 12,000. Roughly 8,000 students will participate as of fall 2013.

- **A Path to a College Degree or a Professional Career.** Choice should not stop at choosing the right school. Families in Louisiana should be able to choose the courses that are right for their child's future after high school.

› **Course Choice.** Groundbreaking in its innovative approach to offering students and their families access to education, the **Course Choice** program has more than 40 authorized course providers – universities and technical colleges, online providers, homegrown Louisiana educational entrepreneurs, and district school systems – offering innovative courses to Louisiana students beginning in the fall of 2013.

- › **Advanced Placement.** Louisiana has historically been the nation's lowest performing state in **AP participation**. The goal of increasing participation through increased funding for test fees and training is beginning to produce significant results. In 2013, Louisiana students took approximately 6,000 more AP courses than in the year before; participation in AP exams also rose by approximately 33 percent. The Department provided training to approximately 400 teachers last year, with nearly double the number of educators signaling their interest to participate in training for the coming year. Passage of **Senate Bill 202** in the 2013 legislative session will further expand AP participation through including AP courses in TOPS and granting extra credit in a student's TOPS GPA.



## **LOUISIANA BELIEVES 2013-2014**

The Department of Education has launched its 2013-2014 Louisiana Believes priorities and has started implementing.

- **BELIEF IN CHILDREN.** The Department will focus on **communicating new expectations for students to families** and classroom educators, so that every child is prepared for more rigorous assessments in 2014. These expectations will start in the early childhood years, so the Department will **expand its Early Childhood Networks** to unify the fragments of the state's early education system.
- **BELIEF IN EDUCATORS.** Louisiana will support its teachers through providing **regular feedback** to every classroom educator and through **allowing more opportunities for teachers to collaborate**. The state will also work with **teacher and principal preparation programs** to tailor their training to the new expectations.
- **BELIEF IN FAMILIES.** Louisiana will overhaul its diplomas to provide **true college or career preparation for all students**. The state will also accelerate its mission to turnaround and provide alternatives to F-rated schools. The **Recovery School District** will partner with schools beyond Baton Rouge and New Orleans, including Shreveport, and the state will **expand high-quality charter schools** in other parts of the state.

